

COVER STORY

NEAHMA WINS THREE NATIONAL AWARDS



Sylvette Betancourt from Mass. Housing and NERSC and member Andrea Dorbrea stand in front of the display of the New England Resident Services Coordinators at NEAHMA's conference. Its successful conferences were part of the reason NEAHMA received the National NAHMA Membership Recruitment reward.

NEAHMA received three major awards for 2011 from the National Affordable Housing Management Association (NAHMA). In a note of congratulations, NAHMA's Nominating Committee Chair Dan Murray and President Scott Reithel called winning in three categories "truly a testament to your incredible organization."

NEAHMA won the 2011 awards in the medium-sized AHMA category for:

- AHMA Membership Recruitment
- AHMA Communities of Quality® (COQ) Awards Program and
- AHMA Innovation Award (co-winner with PAHMA, the Professional Affordable Housing Management Association, which serves Western Pennsylvania).

Award winners will be honored during the NAHMA Industry Awards Ceremony that will take place at the NAHMA 2012 winter meeting. The event will be held on Monday evening starting at 6:00 or 6:30 p.m., March 12, 2012, at the Fairmont Washington, 2401 M St., NW, Washington, D.C.

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One of the happy recipients of NEAHMA's "Adopt a Family for the Holidays" program at Elizabeth Stone House.

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



I want to welcome you to the first issue of the first edition of *NEAHMA News*.

NEAHMA News is being published so that we can have a direct connection to our members and so that they can have a direct connection to us. Published quarterly, *NEAHMA News* will bring you the latest news – like the front-page story on the awards we are proud to be

receiving from NAHMA, after competition among the AHMAs nationally – to coverage of recent events, advice from specialists in the field, news about legislation or regulations that affect our work and programs that we hope our members will become engaged in.

We're excited in this issue to have coverage of our recent, well-attended and enjoyable conference and updates on our philanthropic efforts. We're also happy to report on new members and hope that this newsletter and our other services and programs make this an ever-lengthening list.

For that, we depend on you. The more members we have, the stronger we are and the more influence we have – not just with policymakers but within our industry. A well-trained, well-managed affordable-housing industry is what results in Communities of Quality® that are assets to every city, town and rural area they are in. Remember to ask your colleagues to join NEAHMA so that we can have an even greater impact in years to come.

NEAHMA News is your publication. We hope you will send us your thoughts, ideas, articles, photographs of events in your communities, and anything else you think your peers would be interested in. We're open to your queries about articles you would like to submit. Just email them to news@neahma.org.

We hope you enjoy *NEAHMA News* and look forward to hearing from you.

Scott Ployer, NAHP-e, is Portfolio Manager in Massachusetts for The Community Builders, Inc.

NEAHMA News is published four times a year by the New England Affordable Housing Management Association (NEAHMA).

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MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

NEAHMA TRAININGS NOW COME TO YOU



2012 promises to be an exciting year for NEAHMA. Along with our core classroom trainings that we do every year, we are branching out

and expanding our trainings to include online trainings.

This is a decision that took some time for our Training and Education Committee to make due to several concerns we had as an organization. Will online trainings cannibalize the registrations for our classroom trainings? Is our membership base the right target audience for online trainings? Can we assure the same level of quality and consistency that we do with our classroom trainings?

So many different factors came into play when considering this strategic move. Times are changing; people's schedules are becoming more hectic; and we are all taking on more responsibilities in our positions with less time to do it all! NEAHMA can choose to be complacent or we can make the decision to thrive and meet the needs of all of our members.

By offering two different methods of training, we are hoping that we will accomplish just that! We know that there are members out there who don't have the flexibility or financial means to attend our classroom trainings. Offering online trainings provides members with necessary training from the convenience of their desks. The online trainings are set up so that the registrant can replay

a particular section or stop and go back to the training at a later time. The lower registration fees make these trainings obtainable to management staff of properties with limited training budgets.

Continuing classroom trainings provide the setting for members who require or need the face-to-face contact with a live instructor. However, many of our members who prefer to learn in this setting may want to take advantage of the online courses and use them as a reinforcement or prep training to the live class, particularly when it comes to the national designation exam trainings. We are optimistic pass rates will increase, especially for people who may have English as a second language or for people who simply don't test well.

In November of 2011, we launched our first online training on EIV training with Housing Compliance Training, a project of Piltch Associates. With attractive registration fees and new program incentives, we received over 100 registrations within the first two weeks of the launch of the training. The feedback we received from the training has assured us that this is a worthwhile endeavor for NEAHMA, and we look forward to offering much more online training to continue to provide our members with the training they need to perform their jobs effectively.

We hope you will try our online courses, although it will always be a pleasure to see you in person!

Julie Kelliher is Executive Director of NEAHMA.



WELCOME NEW NEAHMA MEMBERS

REGULAR MEMBERS

North Shore Property Management
Salem, MA

Tenant's Development Corporation
Boston, MA

P&K Management
Richmond Heights, OH

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

AFA Protective Systems, Boston, MA

Carter Brothers Fire & Life Safety,
Walpole, MA

CST, Your Link to Life,
Farmington Hills, MI

Fire Escape Systems, Somerville, MA

Indatus, New Albany, IN

LP International/Power Mate,
Brantford, ON

Mikrodots, Inc., Woburn, MA

NexGen, Inc., Whitinsville, MA

New England Resident Services,
Glastonbury, CT

On-Site Insight, Boston, MA

Porcelain Patch & Glaze Corp.,
Watertown, MA

Propel Insurance/IPAH, Tacoma, WA

Rethinking Power Management,
Boston, MA

Screening Reports, Inc., Bensenville, IL

GAME WAS ON AT

2011 POSTER CONTEST REGIONAL WINNERS

Honored at Conference with an awards ceremony and winners' reception

YASSER GUILLEN

*Pelham Apts., Framingham, MA
Age 7, Corcoran Management*

ANALIA CRUZ

*Market Mill Apts., Lowell, MA
Age 5, Peabody Properties, Inc.,*

SARAH ALEXANDER

*Slater Hill Apts., Pawtucket, RI
Age 5, Cornerstone Corporation*

DEYVI LOPEZ

*Market Mill Apts., Lowell, MA
Age 8, Peabody Properties, Inc.,*

STEPHANIE SILVA

*Pelham Apts., Framingham, MA
Age 8, Corcoran Management*

ANDREW BUGERA

*Slater Hill Apts., Pawtucket, RI
Age 8, Cornerstone Corporation*

MAKAYLA MASON

*Stratton Hill Park, Worcester, MA
Age 9, Corcoran Management*

KEITH ABAKA-AMUAH

*Stratton Hill Park, Worcester, MA
Age 9, Corcoran Management*

JALESKA K. MERCED ROSERO

*Pynchom II Edgewater, Springfield, MA
Age 10, Peabody Properties, Inc.,*

MIRANDA MORGAN

*Bay Village Apts., Fall River, MA
Age 14, First Realty Management*

SETHBONYEM QUIRE

*Oxford Gardens, Providence, RI
Age 14, First Realty Management*

DENILEX RODRIGUEZ

*Oxford Gardens, Providence, RI
Age 14, First Realty Management*

GREG MOORE

*The Fairways, Worcester, MA
Age 19, First Realty Management*

GILBERT SANCHEZ

*Slater Hill Apts., Pawtucket, RI
Age 15, Cornerstone Corporation*

More than 300 attendees got into the spirit of NEAHMA's 23rd Annual Conference & Trade Show, which was held October 20-21, 2011 at the Four Points by Sheraton in Norwood, Mass., and employed the theme "We're On a Roll!"

The theme featured a take-off of the game Monopoly and was called NEAHMAOPOLY, which was an idea submitted by Nanci-Ann Butler from First Realty Management during a contest held by NEAHMA earlier in the year.

As the photo on the right here shows, NEAHMA replaced the traditional Monopoly property names with those of member companies that typically make a generous contribution toward staging the conference.

The NEAHMAOPOLY Board served as a centerpiece during the event, with game pieces and tokens on the tables for dinner. Some vendors also used the idea at their exhibit booths.

NOT JUST FUN AND GAMES

NEAHMA members really were on a roll throughout the event which, in addition to other serious topics, focused on *Practical Business Essentials for Skilled LIHTC Management*.

Among the workshops available to attendees were:

- A regulatory agency roundtable that was led by NAHMA's Executive Director Kris Cook and included representatives from HUD, the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority, JeffCo., Rhode Island Housing and Spectrum.



Scott Ployer giving William Wollinger of Winn Residential his Lifetime Achievement Award at Annual Conference.

Also very informative was this year's keynote speaker, Barbara Fields, the new HUD Regional Administrator for New England. In her new position, which she described at the conference, Fields will serve as HUD's New England liaison to mayors, city managers, elected representatives, state and local officials, members of Congress, private and non-profit developers, stakeholders and customers. She is one of the 10 regional administrators across the U.S. Prior to her new appointment, Fields most recently served as the Executive Director of the Rhode Island office of Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC).

Kris Cook gave a Washington legislative and regulatory update, discussing the challenges of the appropriations process and the need for grassroots advocacy directly to congressional leaders on the impact of budget cuts to affordable housing. Also Joe Diehl, Executive Director from Washington AHMA, which is a chapter of AHMA Northwest and NAHMA, visited and helped out with our conference.

NEAHMA CONFERENCE

NETWORKING AND AWARD-GIVING

The conference's General Session featured NEAHMA's annual business meeting and also honored the following:

- William Wollinger, President of WinnResidential, who received NEAHMA's Lifetime Achievement Award.
- HUD (represented by Joseph McNealy) and Mass Housing (represented by Alan Sharkey), which each received an Agency of the Year Award:
- The Communities of Quality® Award Winners:
 - Exemplary Elderly Property: Bishop Curtis Homes, WinnResidential
 - Exemplary Family Property: Plumley Village East, The Community Builders, Inc.
 - Outstanding Turnaround of a Troubled Property: Heritage Common Apartments, The Community Builders, Inc.

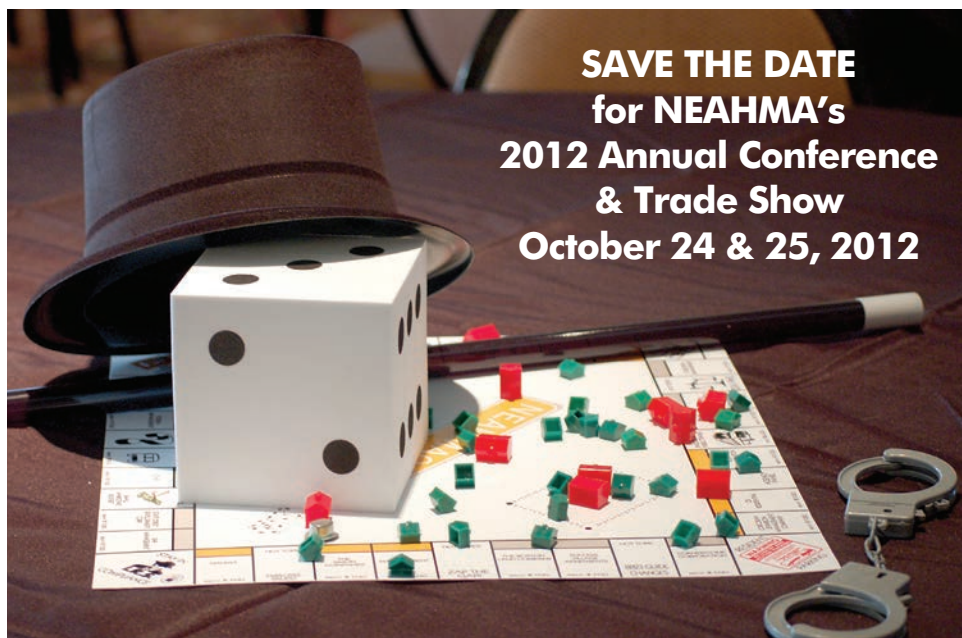


*Scott F. Ployer, NEAHMA's president, and
Ross Ganachia, winner of the T-shirt contest.*

In addition, two members received NEAHMA's National Affordable Housing Professional of the Year Award; Julie Wall from Cornerstone Corp., and the late Jerome Alexander from Success Village, NAHP. Jerome passed away in November, and will be deeply missed by the NEAHMA board.

The conference also offered opportunities for networking and socializing, including at a vendor cocktail reception and at a plated dinner that featured humorist Meagan Johnson, CSP, as the keynote speaker.

NEAHMAOPOLY proved to be a popular theme for this year's conference, which enabled everybody to pass Go and move on to another successful year.



TERRY VOONG

*Charlestown Apts., Charlestown, MA
Age 16, WinnResidential*

LILIYA SITKOVSKAYA

*Kenmore Abbey, Boston, MA,
Age 76, SSDMC*

RUTH DOWNS

*Green Hill Towers, Worcester, MA
Age 80, Cornerstone Corporation*

CHERYL LILLEY

*Fieldstone Apts., Dorchester, MA
Age 47, Peabody Properties, Inc.,*

MELBA FERNANDEZ

*Oxford Place, Providence, RI
Age 80, First Realty Management*

MURIEL BRIGHT

*Cardinal Medeiros Manor, Dorchester MA
Age 52, Peabody Properties, Inc.,*

DENISE JULIAN

*Battles Farm, Brockton, MA
Age 49, First Realty Management*

NEAHMA T-SHIRT DESIGN WINNER

ROSS GANACHIA

*Saugus Commons, Saugus, MA
Age 11, Corcoran Management*

HONORABLE MENTION

CHARLOTTE BICKFORD

*Bangor House, Bangor, ME
Age 68, Weston Associates*

2012 CALENDAR NATIONAL WINNERS

MAKAYLA MASON

*Stratton Hill Park, Worcester, MA
Age 9, Corcoran Management*

GREG MOORE

*The Fairways, Worcester, MA
Age 19, First Realty Management*

MIRANDA MORGAN

*Bay Village Apts., Fall River, MA
Age 14, First Realty Management*

SETHBONYEM QUIRE

*Oxford Gardens, Providence, RI
Age 14, First Realty Management*

Discounts, Contributions When You Buy Through HD Supply

NAHMA announced in late October that it has teamed with HD Supply Facilities Maintenance (HD Supply) to launch a new NAHMA-AHMA Member Benefit Program, through which HD Supply will provide opportunities for training to NAHMA and AHMA members, as well as discounted pricing.

“NAHMA has named HD Supply as a preferred provider of multifamily maintenance supplies and fabrication and renovation services due to its well established reputation for highly competitive pricing, industry leading services and an ability to provide excellent quality inventory quickly,” said NAHMA Executive Director Kris Cook, CAE. “HD Supply has been a strong supporter of our organization and members for many years, and this new relationship and program will allow NAHMA and the local AHMAs to strengthen as they continue to support their members.”

HD Supply National Account Manager Walt Morgan commented on the agreement, “HD Supply has rapidly expanded throughout the country to become the leading supplier to the multifamily industry. With its financial strength, HD Supply is able to secure



excellent pricing for its clients as well as offer customer service, special orders, installation and technical support services.”

Under the new NAHMA-AHMA Member Benefit Program, HD Supply will:

1. Provide NAHMA and local AHMA members with the lowest catalog price regardless of order quantity.
2. Contribute to the AHMA and NAHMA education, training and scholarship programs based on net purchases by properties not currently enrolled in an HD Supply partnership agreement.
3. Provide unlimited access to its online maintenance courses. These courses cover topics such as appliance repair, HVAC repair, pool maintenance, plumbing repair, electrical repair and make-ready maintenance.
4. Provide in-person classroom training at no cost to any AHMA that qualifies based on annualized per year spending.

To launch the program, HD Supply has assigned a company representative to each AHMA as the main point of contact. The HD Supply representatives will assist AHMA executive directors and presidents in rolling out the new program to maximize benefits to the AHMAs and their members, as well as identify possible other ways in

which HD Supply can help support the AHMAs’ programs and activities.

The largest distributor of maintenance products to the multifamily housing industry, HD Supply Facilities Maintenance offers 22,000 items in stock with free, next-day delivery to 95% of the nation. The company offers free technical support and has a team of more than 650 field and national account representatives located throughout the US. In addition to an extensive line of MRO products, HD Supply Facilities Maintenance offers fabrication and renovation services. To place an order, call 1-800-431-3000 or visit hdsupplysolutions.com.

For questions on the program, please contact Walter Morgan at walter.morgan@hdsupply.com or phone 919-225-6066. Additional information can also be found at NAHMA by contacting Membership Services Manager Elizabeth Tucker at elizabeth.tucker@nahma.org or phone 703-683-8630, ext. 12.

Important Notice: Although this discount program benefits the educational and scholarship programs of NAHMA and the AHMAs, and therefore residents of low-income housing, nothing in this program alters the regulatory requirements of particular projects with regard to the appropriateness and pricing of items acquired.



Apply Now for 2012 NAHMA Scholarships



Mike Chaykler of Pequot Highlands in Salem, Mass., received a \$1,000 scholarship from the NAHMA Educational Foundation. He is a junior at the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy & Health Sciences in Boston. Pequot Highlands is managed by NEAHMA member WinnResidential.

Wayne Fox, chairperson of the NAHMA Educational Foundation, recently announced that the link to the 2012 NAHMA Scholarship Application has been posted on the NAHMA website (www.nahma.org).

Through its first five years of existence the NAHMA Educational Foundation awarded 179 scholarships worth more than \$179,000 to worthy residents of affordable housing across America. In 2011, seven NEAHMA residents received scholarships totaling \$9,500. In the last four years, 26 awards have been made to NEAHMA residents, for an aggregate total of more than \$30,000.

Residents of NEAHMA-member apartment communities have been successful in applying to this most worthwhile program and should be encouraged to continue in 2012. Upon accessing the NAHMA website, applicants should click on the NAHMA Educational Foundation icon and scroll to the bottom of the page and click on the application link.

In addition to the application itself, a complete information section and timeline is included. To complete an application, residents who are high school graduates need to fill out the application form, provide an essay, two references, a Certification of Residency in Good Standing and a current valid grade transcript. Anyone with questions can contact Bruce W. Johnson, NAHMA Scholarship Program Administrator, at bwjec@comcast.net.

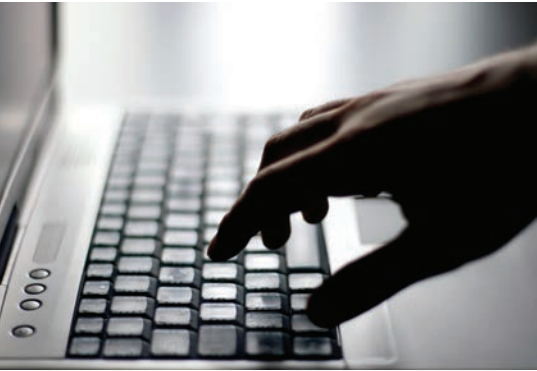
Why not encourage your residents to take advantage of this worthwhile program that provides funding for school in these tough economic times?



Applications must be filed online and the deadline for completed applications is 10:00 p.m. eastern time on May 18th, 2012.

DON'T GAMBLE WITH CRIMINAL SCREENING DECISIONS

By Craig Leuffen, Corelogic SafeRent



Look for a criminal screening product that categorizes criminal records and automatically provides a clear accept-or-decline leasing decision based on criteria established for the community. ...The technology should quickly evaluate criminal record search results and automatically deliver an accept/decline decision to your staff.

An increasing number of management companies are utilizing criminal screening tools to improve the safety of their communities for residents, guests and staff. While criminal screening can decrease a management company's liability due to criminal acts, it can also expose the company to Fair Housing compliance issues.

In order to minimize compliance risks, it is imperative that management companies establish a criminal screening policy that treats applicants equally and fairly. While each management company should consult their legal counsel when establishing or updating a criminal screening policy, some questions to consider include:

1. Does your criminal screening policy define accept-or-decline criteria by specific offense type and offense date?
2. Does your leasing staff have the skills required to interpret complicated criminal records?
3. Are you certain that criminal screening decisions are made fairly and consistently at your properties?
4. Can your leasing staff make criminal screening decisions without assistance from mid- or senior-level management?
5. Does your current process allow you to monitor criminal screening data, offense types found and accept-or-decline trends in order to update the policy to current business conditions?
6. Can you ensure and verify that criminal screening is run on all applicants?

If you answered no to any of these questions, an automated criminal screening service may enable you to establish and enforce a more consistent and compliant criminal screening policy.

With most criminal screening tools, leasing agents are expected to make real-time decisions about what searches should be conducted and determine if criminal offenders should receive an "accept" or "decline" leasing decision. This places undue burden on the agents and, if searches are conducted or interpreted inconsistently, increases the risk of Fair Housing violations. Consequently, most existing criminal screening tools expose multifamily businesses to unnecessary risk.

Look for a criminal screening product that categorizes criminal records and automatically provides a clear accept-or-decline leasing decision based on criteria established for the community. The product should allow you to set the policies for accepting or declining criminal offenses using criminal offense categories covering crimes against person, property and society. The technology should quickly evaluate criminal record search results and automatically deliver an accept/decline decision to your staff.

Ideally, your criminal screening product should include management reporting to monitor the number of accept-and-decline decisions returned and to view the breakdown of criminal search results by offense type. With this insight, you can monitor staff performance and adjust screening criteria to meet business and legal demands.

Craig Leuffen is Regional Sales Manager for CoreLogic SafeRent. CoreLogic SafeRent offers an automated criminal screening service called Registry CrimSAFE®. For more information about CrimSAFE visit saferent.com.

Take a Bite Out of Bed Bug Infestation

Bed bugs are horrifying in many ways, not least of which is the effect they have on the operating costs of your properties. Wells Fargo Insurance Services, through its Multifamily Affordable Housing Insurance Program (MAHIP), can provide insurance solutions that take the “bite” out of the financial impact of bed bug infestation so that you are able to focus on providing a home to people in need. As a National Affordable Housing Management Association (NAHMA) member, you have access to the Bug Infestation Recovery Insurance™ coverage—a comprehensive and cost-effective option available through the NAHMA endorsed MAHIP program.

THE BUG INFESTATION RECOVERY INSURANCE™

COVERAGE RESPONDS TO:

- Confirmed bed bug infestations* in lodging rooms
- Impact from publicity of a confirmed bed bug infestation at affected location
- Extortion threats

**Coverage applies to infestations of cimex lectularius and cimex hemipterus Bug Infestation Recovery Insurance™*

COVERAGE PROVIDES:

- Business interruption—loss of rental income
 - Rehabilitation expenses (extra expenses)
 - Cost of marketing efforts
 - Overtime of regular staff
 - Other mitigation related expenses
- Extortion threat payments
- Decontamination expenses for affected lodging room
- Decontamination expenses for lodging rooms immediately adjacent to affected lodging room
- Costs of cleaning, decontaminating, or exterminating affected residents' homes
- First aid administered to residents onsite
- Expert and immediate crisis management services, including:

- Customer/crisis information line 24 hours a day, seven days a week
- Proactive, well-coordinated, cohesive operating team with solutions specific to client's needs
- Assistance with regulatory authorities and regulatory requirements
- Assistance with restoration of community reputation, effective marketing and media control

ADDITIONAL PROGRAM FEATURES:

- No deductible applies to loss of lodging revenue
- No deductible applies to rehabilitation expenses
- No deductible applies to crisis management expenses
- No deductible applies to extortion threat payments
- No deductible/Co-insurance applies to the first \$5,000 of decontamination expenses (10 percent co-insurance applies after first \$5,000 paid per period of insurance)
- No waiting period/No loss threshold required to trigger coverage
- Up to six months period of restoration/rehabilitation
- Broad range of limits available
- Access to a crisis management group



Bed Bug Liability is available under a separate policy form. Please advise if you are interested in exploring your coverage options.

Call today or visit us at
wfs.wellsfargo.com/mahip

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601 Union Street, Suite 1300
Seattle, WA 98101
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MAHIP@wellsfargo.com

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A SPRING AHEAD TO COLORFUL LANDSCAPE ENHANCEMENTS

By Bill Butts, ValleyCrest Landscape Maintenance

Spring is one of the most colorful of all seasons, thanks to Mother Nature and a little helping hand from an experienced landscape service provider. The onset of spring signals a renewal of activity for plants that have been slowed or stopped by the short days and cooler temperatures of winter. Plants that went dormant come to life and people begin to spend more time outside.

It is an exciting time of year at properties when the landscape begins to look better every week. Adding seasonal color enhancements creates even more drama. Almost everyone notices flowers. Many managers report that color displays attract the attention of residents and visitors and complement a well-maintained landscape. This adds value to the property, creates a pleasing atmosphere and gives the site an identity that distinguishes it from competing properties.

When a property is aesthetically appealing and colorful, people are happy to be there, and properties with



particularly dramatic flower displays may be chosen as a destination just to check out the flowers. Flower displays with large patterns of color have a significant impact at high-traffic sites.

These displays should be different from what someone would want in a garden or park. To prepare for the spring season, here are some cost effective landscape solutions designed to enhance a property's value and curb appeal, while still adhering to best practices in green landscaping.

- Seasonal color displays can be expensive, so there's often an urge to reduce display size as a way to achieve cost efficiencies. But costs should be balanced against results. Smaller display size results in significantly reduced visual impact. A better way to go would be to have fewer large displays rather than reduce the size of all the displays.
- Prioritize primary, secondary or tertiary areas. Keep large displays of color in the primary areas even if the tertiary areas get none. Adding

Charity CORNER

SUSAN G. KOMEN FOR THE CURE: This year's race was scheduled for October 30, 2011 in Boston. Due to the October snowstorm, the race was cancelled. Team NEAHMA was still a success, with 70 people on the team and \$1,800 raised. In appreciation of our great team, we were recognized with an award for having the largest team in our category. We would especially like to acknowledge ARS, First Realty Management, Housing Management Resources, Corcoran Management, and J.C.H.E and Peabody Properties, Inc. for organizing such large walking teams. We encourage companies to have five or more people sign to walk, and we will add their logo to our team shirts. We encourage other management companies to take advantage of this opportunity next year by putting a team together and getting your company logo on the back of our team T-shirts.

significant amounts of color in high priority areas – even if it is one bed – is an investment that results in maximum impact. Keep in mind the flow of people. The goal is to have them see flowers sooner rather than later. After being wowed by a dramatic display while walking into a property, any displays seen later will have additional impact.

- Typically, landscape plans call for flower beds to be replanted four or five times a year with seasonal color. Instead, landscapers are converting some seasonal color beds – flowers that bloom in short cycles – to beds of color that do not need to be changed every three to four months. By converting some of the beds that are changed seasonally to flowering perennials that come back every year and thrive throughout the growing



season, properties can reduce costs without dramatic impacts to the overall experience.

- Perennials also reduce the number of color changes needed during the year. Adding flowering perennials can bring long-lasting color and make an eye-catching statement. A landscape partner can recommend plant lists for the specific area in which a property is located.
- Another smart approach to adding color that doesn't break the budget may involve selective removal and replanting of marginally performing or high-maintenance plants. It is also possible to change the design or size of plants or add better-adapted plants to create visual impact. Well-placed trees also help generate savings in heating and cooling costs.
- The most effective plantings involve the use of a single color, a two-color combination or a three-color combination. For example, mixed color plantings of pansies appear dark because of the dominance of dark colors in the mix. Mixed petunia plantings, while they are bright, appear random and less formal. Small containers or walkway plantings are

well suited for single-color plantings. Large installations can support three-color combinations easily. Picking the right colors could involve the use of a color wheel or by simply comparing colors in the nursery.

- Mulching is also a big component of a cost-effective and healthy landscape. Shredded, composted green waste used as surface mulch saves the expense of having to haul it away or from having to purchase expensive bark products. Grass cuttings can be mulch-mowed back into turf areas rather than continually paying for removal and it is healthier for the grass, too.
- Another consideration for adding color to a property is the use of potted plant displays. The pots should complement the property's buildings, hardscapes and other containers already in use, such as trash receptacles.

Bill Butts is a Regional Sales Leader with ValleyCrest Landscape Maintenance and can be reached at (617) 484-3360 or at bbutts@valleycrest.com. ValleyCrest has offices in Belmont, Billerica, Boston and Foxboro. For more information, visit www.valleycrest.com.

ELIZABETH STONE HOUSE: Every holiday season NEAHMA partners with Elizabeth Stone House and its "Adopt a Family for the Holidays" program. Thank you to all the NEAHMA members who contributed to the 2011 drive. In June, NEAHMA received the Elizabeth Stone House "You Matter" award in recognition of NEAHMA's ongoing support and contributions to the Adopt a Family program. This award is shared with our members, from whom many of the gifts are purchased for families at the shelter.

THE RUTH PROJECT: Team NEAHMA is always accepting used cell phones and small ink cartridges, which can be brought to trainings. The mission of The Ruth Project is to work with women in need who live in the greater Attleboro-Taunton area. Volunteers at The Ruth Project assist women who have faced issues of crime, homelessness, and separation from their children, as well as poverty, addiction, and abuse. Cell phones and ink cartridges are recycled and exchanged for cash donations to the program. For more information go to www.theruthprojectma.org.



NEAHMA WINS THREE NATIONAL AWARDS

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DATES TO REMEMBER

Gillette Seminar

May 10, 2012

Kids' Day

July 18, 2012

IREM/NEAHMA

Summer Meeting

July 25, 2012

NEAHMA Conference and Trade Show

October 24 & 25, 2012

Specifics on the awards won by NEAHMA include the following:

- **AHMA Membership Recruitment**

In 2011 NEAHMA had 128 **regular** members, of which 122 were renewals and six were new. **Associate** members saw 47 renewals and 17 new members, for a total of 61. This includes new associate **vendor** members. NEAHMA's associate membership is based on its trade show exhibitor registration which, due to limited space, is capped at 60 members. This year the increase is mainly due to the success of our Annual Conference & Tradeshow. NEAHMA's membership retention rate is very high (96.8 percent), with cancelled memberships due to financial reasons and not dissatisfaction with NEAHMA. New member recruitment is conducted primarily through NEAHMA's training programs, which benefit from referrals from the local HUD office or a performance based contract administrator (PBCA). A unique one-time incentive for potential members is called NEAHMA Bucks, issued so that a person can come to training and experience what NEAHMA is all about first-hand.

- **AHMA Communities of Quality® Awards Program**

NEAHMA received this award for having the most member properties submit applications to the COQ awards program. More than 90 applications were submitted, many of them from The Community Builders and Peabody Properties, which went

all-out and submitted a combined total of more than 80.

- **AHMA Innovation Award**

NEAHMA received the Innovation Award for two programs. The first was an effort to better expand its reach and services into areas of New England further afield than its traditional focus of Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut. NEAHMA began co-sponsoring trainings with affordable housing organizations in Vermont, Maine and New Hampshire and then established a partnership with the Maine Housing Authority and others. There is now a planning committee with each of the three state organizations, and NEAHMA participated in their Tri-State Conference this past October. The large geographical area covered by these organizations is also an opportunity for NEAHMA's online training program to achieve greater reach and be of greater service. The second innovation is the TEAM NEAHMA charity program, and in particular its relationship with the Elizabeth Stone House and the Susan G. Komen Walk for the Cure (see related article on page 10).

NEAHMA would like as many of its members as possible to be on hand to accept this award at NAHMA's winter meeting, since it's the membership who really deserves the honor. Additional details on the NAHMA meeting will be posted in January at www.nahma.org/meetings/MeetingInfo.html.

neahma
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